

Catch the Moon by Judith Ortiz Cofer

The Secret Heart by Robert P. Tristram Coffin

BEFORE YOU READ

In “Catch the Moon” you will look into the troubled heart of Luis Cintrón—a young man who sometimes behaves in ways that he himself doesn’t really understand. As you read about his past and present experiences, look for ways he changes his outlook toward life—especially after he meets the beautiful Naomi. Then, read a poem about a secret heart and how it changes a boy’s understanding of his father. Think about each selection’s message about life and human nature as you read.

LITERARY FOCUS: THEME AND CHARACTER

One way to identify the **theme** of a literary work—its underlying truth about life—is to pay close attention to its **main character**. The experiences of a story’s main character may help you pinpoint the story’s major themes. A main character will often change in an important way during the course of a story or come to a new realization about life. This change or realization is often linked to the story’s theme.

- As you read “Catch the Moon,” observe how Luis, the **main character**, handles his conflicts.
- Look for details that show how and why Luis changes his attitude toward life. These details may help you identify the story’s **theme**.
- As you read “The Secret Heart,” think about its title. The title of a work often hints at its theme.

READING SKILLS: MAKING GENERALIZATIONS

When you make a **generalization**, you look at evidence and make a broad statement about what it tells you. Someone who says “All stories contain conflicts” is making a generalization based on his or her experience with many stories.

To make a generalization about a story’s theme, you have to—

- think about the main events and conflicts in the story
- recognize what the characters have learned by the end of the story
- relate the story to your own experiences



Reading Standard 1.1
Identify and use the literal and figurative meanings of words and understand word derivations.

Reading Standard 3.5
Compare works that express a universal theme and provide evidence to support the ideas expressed in each work.

VOCABULARY DEVELOPMENT

PREVIEW SELECTION VOCABULARY

The following words appear in “Catch the Moon.” Get to know these words before you begin reading.

harassing (har'əs-in) *v.* used as *n.*: bothering; troubling.

*The gang got into trouble for **harassing** local authorities.*

dismantled (dis-mant'ld) *v.*: took apart.

*After he **dismantled** the car, the mechanic put the parts in a specially marked place.*

vintage (vin'tij) *adj.*: dating from a time long past.

*The **vintage** car has not lost the style it had once been famous for.*

ebony (eb'ə-nē) *adj.*: dark or black.

*In the sun her **ebony** hair was as shiny as a blackbird's feathers.*

sarcastic (sär-kas'tik) *adj.*: mocking; taunting.

*To his father, Luis's unfriendly remarks and **sarcastic** tone sounded disrespectful.*

relics (rel'iks) *n.*: objects or things from the past that may have special meaning or associations, sometimes religious ones.

*Since her death, her possessions had become **relics**—objects that helped his father keep her memory alive.*

FIGURATIVE LANGUAGE: IDIOMS, SIMILES, AND METAPHORS

Words and phrases describing one thing in terms of another, very different thing are called **figurative language**. Figurative language is not meant to be taken literally. Here are three common types of figurative language:

- An **idiom** is an expression peculiar to a particular language, one that cannot be understood from the literal, or dictionary, definitions of its words. For example, “I’m working my hands to the bone” is an expression that means “I’m working extra hard.”
- A **simile** uses the word *like*, *as*, *than*, or *resembles* to compare two unlike things.
- A **metaphor** compares two unlike things by saying that something *is* something else. It omits the word *like*, *as*, *than*, or *resembles*. For example, in the story the pile of hubcaps Luis sits on is called a “silver mountain.”

As you read “Catch the Moon,” watch for the figurative language that Judith Ortiz Cofer uses in her story.

CATCH THE MOON

Judith Ortiz Cofer

CHARACTER

The main character of the story is revealed right away. Circle his name.

CHARACTER

Underline the sentence in lines 1–7 that gives Luis's **motivation**, or reason, for breaking into the woman's house. Then, circle the sentence that tells what Luis thinks of the woman. What do his actions and feelings suggest about Luis?

INFER

Re-read lines 8–19. How does Luis feel about his job?

Luis Cintrón sits on top of a six-foot pile of hubcaps and watches his father walk away into the steel jungle of his car junkyard. Released into his old man's custody¹ after six months in juvenile hall—for breaking and entering—and he didn't even take anything. He did it on a dare. But the old lady with the million cats was a light sleeper, and good with her aluminum cane. He has a scar on his head to prove it.

Now Luis is wondering whether he should have stayed in and done his full time. Jorge Cintrón of Jorge Cintrón & Son, Auto Parts and Salvage, has decided that Luis should wash and polish every hubcap in the yard. The hill he is sitting on is only the latest couple of hundred wheel covers that have come in. Luis grunts and stands up on top of his silver mountain. He yells at no one, "Someday, son, all this will be yours," and sweeps his arms like the Pope blessing a crowd over the piles of car sandwiches and mounds of metal parts that cover this acre of land outside the city. He is the "Son" of Jorge Cintrón & Son, and so far his father has had more than one reason to wish it was plain Jorge Cintrón on the sign.

Luis has been getting in trouble since he started high school two years ago, mainly because of the "social group" he organized—a bunch of guys who were into **harassing** the local authorities. Their thing was taking something to the limit on a dare or, better still, doing something dangerous, like breaking into a house, not to steal, just to prove that they could do it. This was Luis's specialty, coming up with very complicated

1. **custody** *n.*: term describing the legal responsibility of one person for another.

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Notes

plans, like military strategies, and assigning the “jobs” to guys who wanted to join the Tiburones.

Tiburón means “shark,” and Luis had gotten the name from watching an old movie about a Puerto Rican gang called the Sharks with his father. Luis thought it was one of the dumbest films he had ever seen. Everybody sang their lines, and the guys all pointed their toes and leaped in the air when they were supposed to be slaughtering each other. But he liked their name, the Sharks, so he made it Spanish and had it air-painted on his black T-shirt with a killer shark under it, jaws opened wide and dripping with blood. It didn’t take long for other guys in the barrio² to ask about it.

Man, had they had a good time. The girls were interested
40 too. Luis outsmarted everybody by calling his organization a
social club and registering it at Central High. That meant they
were legal, even let out of last-period class on Fridays for their
“club” meetings. It was just this year, after a couple of botched

VOCABULARY

harassing (har'əs·iŋ) *v.* used as *n.*: bothering; troubling.

WORD STUDY

In Spanish, unlike in English, each vowel is pronounced, making a syllable. *Tiburones* (line 28), meaning “sharks,” is pronounced (tē-bu-rōō'nēs).

CLARIFY

Pause at line 34. The movie is *West Side Story* (1961), the film version of the 1956 Broadway musical based on Shakespeare's *Romeo and Juliet*.

2. **barrio** (bär'ē-ō) *n.*: in the United States, a Spanish-speaking neighborhood.

INFER

What can you infer about Luis's abilities based on what you learn in lines 51–66?

FLUENCY

Read the boxed passage aloud two times. Be sure you practice how to pronounce unfamiliar words before you begin.

IDENTIFY CAUSE & EFFECT

Underline the important past event that is revealed in lines 67–73. Circle how that event affected Luis's father.

jobs, that the teachers had started getting suspicious. The first one to go wrong was when he sent Kenny Matoa to *borrow* some “souvenirs” out of Anita Robles’s locker. He got caught. It seems that Matoa had been reading Anita’s diary and didn’t hear her coming down the hall. Anita was supposed to be in the gym at that time but had copped out with the usual female excuse of cramps. You could hear her screams all the way to Market Street.

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She told the principal all she knew about the Tiburones, and Luis had to talk fast to convince old Mr. Williams that the club did put on cultural activities such as the Save the Animals talent show. What Mr. Williams didn’t know was that the animal that was being “saved” with the ticket sales was Luis’s pet boa, which needed quite a few live mice to stay healthy and happy. They kept E. S. (which stood for “Endangered Species”) in Luis’s room, but she belonged to the club and it was the members’ responsibility to raise the money to feed their mascot.³ So last year they had sponsored their first annual Save the Animals talent show, and it had been a great success. The Tiburones had come dressed as Latino Elvises and did a grand finale to “All Shook Up” that made the audience go wild. Mr. Williams had smiled while Luis talked, maybe remembering how the math teacher, Mrs. Laguna, had dragged him out in the aisle to rock-and-roll with her. Luis had gotten out of that one, but barely.

60

His father was a problem, too. He objected to the T-shirt logo, calling it disgusting and vulgar. Mr. Cintrón prided himself on his own neat, elegant style of dressing after work, and on his manners and large vocabulary, which he picked up by taking correspondence courses⁴ in just about everything. Luis thought it was just his way of staying busy since Luis’s mother had died, almost three years ago, of cancer. He had never gotten over it.

70

All this was going through Luis’s head as he slid down the hill of hubcaps. The tub full of soapy water, the can of polish,

3. **mascot** *n.*: person, animal, or thing kept by a group or team as its symbol or for good luck.
4. **correspondence courses** *n.*: courses of study conducted through the mail.

and the bag of rags had been neatly placed in front of a makeshift table made from two car seats and a piece of plywood. Luis heard a car drive up and someone honk their horn. His father emerged from inside a new red Mustang that had been totaled. He usually **dismantled** every small feature by hand before sending the vehicle into the *cementerio*,⁵ as he called the lot. Luis watched as the most beautiful girl he had ever seen climbed out of a **vintage** white Volkswagen Bug. She stood in the sunlight in her white sundress waiting for his father, while Luis stared. She was like a smooth wood carving. Her skin was mahogany, almost black, and her arms and legs were long and thin, but curved in places so that she did not look bony and hard—more like a ballerina. And her **ebony** hair was braided close to her head. Luis let his breath out, feeling a little dizzy. He had forgotten to breathe. Both the girl and his father heard him. Mr. Cintrón waved him over.

“Luis, the señorita here has lost a wheel cover. Her car is twenty-five years old, so it will not be an easy match. Come look on this side.”

Luis tossed a wrench he’d been holding into a toolbox like he was annoyed, just to make a point about slave labor. Then he followed his father, who knelt on the gravel and began to point out every detail of the hubcap. Luis was hardly listening. He watched the girl take a piece of paper from her handbag.

“Señor Cintrón, I have drawn the hubcap for you, since I will have to leave soon. My home address and telephone number are here, and also my parents’ office number.” She handed the paper to Mr. Cintrón, who nodded.

“Sí, señorita, very good. This will help my son look for it. Perhaps there is one in that stack there.” He pointed to the pile of caps that Luis was supposed to wash and polish. “Yes, I’m almost certain that there is a match there. Of course, I do not know if it’s near the top or the bottom. You will give us a few days, yes?”

5. **cementerio** (se-men-te'rē-ō) *n.*: Spanish for “cemetery.”

VOCABULARY

dismantled (dis-mant'ld) *v.*: took apart.

vintage (vin'tij) *adj.*: dating from a time long past.

ebony (eb'ə-nē) *adj.*: dark or black.

WORD STUDY

In line 85, underline the **simile**. What two things are being compared?

INFER

Underline the words in lines 89–91 that describe Luis’s reaction to the girl. What does his response suggest about his feelings?

WORD STUDY

Señorita (se'nyō-re'tā), in line 92, means “miss” or “young woman” in Spanish. *Señor* (se-nyōr'), in line 100, means “Mr.” or “sir” in Spanish.

CHARACTER

Underline the words in lines 114–122 that describe how Naomi responds when she notices how sad Mr. Cintrón becomes. What can you **infer**, or guess, about Naomi from her actions?

WORD STUDY

Adiós (a'dē-ōs'), in line 120, is Spanish for "goodbye." *Adiós* is from two Latin words: *ad*, meaning "to," and *deus*, meaning "God." (*Goodbye* is a shortened form of "God be with you.")

CHARACTER

How did Luis react to his mother's death? Underline the passage in lines 127–133 that supports your answer.

WORD STUDY

An **idiom** is an expression that cannot be understood from the dictionary definitions of the words. Underline the idiom in lines 140–143. What does the idiom mean?

110 Luis just stared at his father like he was crazy. But he didn't say anything because the girl was smiling at him with a funny expression on her face. Maybe she thought he had X-ray eyes like Superman, or maybe she was mocking him.

"Please call me Naomi, Señor Cintrón. You know my mother. She is the director of the funeral home. . . ." Mr. Cintrón seemed surprised at first; he prided himself on having a great memory. Then his friendly expression changed to one of sadness as he recalled the day of his wife's burial. Naomi did not finish her sentence. She reached over and placed her hand on Mr. Cintrón's arm for a moment. Then she said "Adiós" softly, and got in her shiny white car. She waved to them as she left, and her gold bracelets flashing in the sun nearly blinded Luis.

Mr. Cintrón shook his head. "How about that," he said as if to himself. "They are the Dominican owners of Ramirez Funeral Home." And, with a sigh, "She seems like such a nice young woman. Reminds me of your mother when she was her age."

Hearing the funeral parlor's name, Luis remembered too. The day his mother died, he had been in her room at the hospital while his father had gone for coffee. The alarm had gone off on her monitor and nurses had come running in, pushing him outside. After that, all he recalled was the anger that had made him punch a hole in his bedroom wall. And afterward he had refused to talk to anyone at the funeral. Strange, he did see a black girl there who didn't try like the others to talk to him, but actually ignored him as she escorted family members to the viewing room and brought flowers in. Could it be that the skinny girl in a frilly white dress had been Naomi? She didn't act like she had recognized him today, though. Or maybe she thought that he was a jerk.

140 Luis grabbed the drawing from his father. The old man looked like he wanted to walk down memory lane. But Luis was in no mood to listen to the old stories about his falling in love on a tropical island. The world they'd lived in before he was born wasn't his world. No beaches and palm trees here.

Only junk as far as he could see. He climbed back up his hill and studied Naomi's sketch. It had obviously been done very carefully. It was signed "Naomi Ramirez" in the lower right-hand corner. He memorized the telephone number.

150 Luis washed hubcaps all day until his hands were red and raw, but he did not come across the small silver bowl that would fit the VW. After work he took a few practice Frisbee shots across the yard before showing his father what he had accomplished: rows and rows of shiny rings drying in the sun. His father nodded and showed him the bump on his temple where one of Luis's flying saucers had gotten him. "Practice makes perfect, you know. Next time you'll probably decapitate⁶ me." Luis heard him struggle with the word *decapitate*, which Mr. Cintrón pronounced in syllables. Showing off his big vocabulary again, Luis thought. He looked closely at the bump, though. He felt bad about it.

6. **decapitate** (dē·kap'ə·tāt') *v.*: cut off the head of.



CHARACTER

Underline the sentence in lines 149–151 that shows how Luis's attitude toward his job has changed. What do you think is the reason for the change?

WORD STUDY

Underline the **metaphor** in line 155. What has Luis done to his father?

Notes

CHARACTER

Re-read lines 165–172. Underline the words that describe the change that Luis has suddenly discovered in his father.

WORD STUDY

Curfew (line 181) means “the time when one must be home.”

Curfew is from two Old French words meaning “cover fire.” In the Middle Ages in Europe, bells rang when it was time for the townspeople to put out their fires and go to bed.

VOCABULARY

sarcastic (sär-kas'tik) *adj.*: mocking; taunting; in a manner that makes fun of something or someone.

160 “They look good, hijo,⁷” Mr. Cintrón made a sweeping gesture with his arms over the yard. “You know, all this will have to be classified. My dream is to have all the parts divided by year, make of car, and condition. Maybe now that you are here to help me, this will happen.”

“Pop . . .” Luis put his hand on his father’s shoulder. They were the same height and build, about five foot six and muscular. “The judge said six months of free labor for you, not life, okay?” Mr. Cintrón nodded, looking distracted. It was then that Luis suddenly noticed how gray his hair had turned—it used to
170 be shiny black like his own—and that there were deep lines in his face. His father had turned into an old man and he hadn’t even noticed.

“Son, you must follow the judge’s instructions. Like she said, next time you get in trouble, she’s going to treat you like an adult, and I think you know what that means. Hard time, no breaks.”

“Yeah, yeah. That’s what I’m doing, right? Working my hands to the bone instead of enjoying my summer. But listen, she didn’t put me under house arrest, right? I’m going out
180 tonight.”

“Home by ten. She did say something about a curfew, Luis.” Mr. Cintrón had stopped smiling and was looking upset. It had always been hard for them to talk more than a minute or two before his father got offended at something Luis said, or at his **sarcastic** tone. He was always doing something wrong.

Luis threw the rag down on the table and went to sit in his father’s ancient Buick, which was in mint condition. They drove home in silence.

After sitting down at the kitchen table with his father to
190 eat a pizza they had picked up on the way home, Luis asked to borrow the car. He didn’t get an answer then, just a look that meant “Don’t bother me right now.”

7. **hijo** (ē'hō) *n.*: Spanish for “son.”

Before bringing up the subject again, Luis put some ice cubes in a Baggie and handed it to Mr. Cintrón, who had made the little bump on his head worse by rubbing it. It had GUILTY written on it, Luis thought.

“Gracias, hijo.” His father placed the bag on the bump and made a face as the ice touched his skin.

200 They ate in silence for a few minutes more; then Luis decided to ask about the car again.

“I really need some fresh air, Pop. Can I borrow the car for a couple of hours?”

“You don’t get enough fresh air at the yard? We’re lucky that we don’t have to sit in a smelly old factory all day. You know that?”

“Yeah, Pop. We’re real lucky.” Luis always felt irritated that his father was so grateful to own a junkyard, but he held his anger back and just waited to see if he’d get the keys without having to get in an argument.

210 “Where are you going?”

“For a ride. Not going anywhere. Just out for a while. Is that okay?”

His father didn’t answer, just handed him a set of keys, as shiny as the day they were manufactured. His father polished everything that could be polished: doorknobs, coins, keys, spoons, knives, and forks, like he was King Midas counting his silver and gold. Luis thought his father must be really lonely to polish utensils only he used anymore. They had been picked out by his wife, though, so they were like **relics**. Nothing she had
220 ever owned could be thrown away. Only now the dishes, forks, and spoons were not used to eat the yellow rice and red beans, the fried chicken, or the mouth-watering sweet plantains that his mother had cooked for them. They were just kept in the cabinets that his father had turned into a museum for her. Mr. Cintrón could cook as well as his wife, but he didn’t have the heart to do it anymore. Luis thought that maybe if they ate together once

WORD STUDY

Circle the **idiom** that Luis uses (lines 195–196). What does the idiom mean?

WORD STUDY

Gracias (grä'sē-äs'), in line 197, means “thank you.” It has the same origin as the English word *gracious*.

PREDICT

In lines 210–212, Luis won’t tell his father where he plans to go. Where do you predict he will go?

CHARACTER

In lines 213–218, Luis comes to another important realization about his father. Locate and underline it.

VOCABULARY

relics (rel'iks) *n.*: objects or things from the past that may have special meaning or associations, sometimes religious ones.

INTERPRET

Re-read lines 229–234. In what ways does Luis seem to be becoming more responsible and caring?

INFER

Pause at line 244. Why does Luis drive to the Ramirez Funeral Home?

INTERPRET

Circle the **simile** in lines 246–248 that describes the tree at the time of Mrs. Cintrón's funeral. Underline the words that tell what the tree looks like now. What might the change in the tree suggest about how Luis might change?

in a while things might get better between them, but he always had something to do around dinnertime and ended up at a hamburger joint. Tonight was the first time in months they had
230 sat down at the table together.

Luis took the keys. “Thanks,” he said, walking out to take his shower. His father kept looking at him with those sad, patient eyes. “Okay. I’ll be back by ten, and keep the ice on that egg,” Luis said without looking back.

He had just meant to ride around his old barrio, see if any of the Tiburones were hanging out at El Building, where most of them lived. It wasn’t far from the single-family home his father had bought when the business started paying off: a house that his mother lived in for three months before she took up residence
240 at St. Joseph’s Hospital. She never came home again. These days Luis wished he still lived in that tiny apartment where there was always something to do, somebody to talk to.

Instead Luis found himself parked in front of the last place his mother had gone to: Ramirez Funeral Home. In the front yard was a huge oak tree that Luis remembered having climbed during the funeral to get away from people. The tree looked different now, not like a skeleton as it had then, but green with leaves. The branches reached to the second floor of the house, where the family lived.

250 For a while Luis sat in the car allowing the memories to flood back into his brain. He remembered his mother before the illness changed her. She had not been beautiful, as his father told everyone; she had been a sweet lady, not pretty but not ugly. To him, she had been the person who always told him that she was proud of him and loved him. She did that every night when she came to his bedroom door to say goodnight. As a joke he would sometimes ask her, “Proud of what? I haven’t done anything.” And she’d always say, “I’m just proud that you are my son.” She wasn’t perfect or anything. She had bad days when nothing he
260 did could make her smile, especially after she got sick. But he never heard her say anything negative about anyone. She always

blamed *el destino*, fate, for what went wrong. He missed her. He missed her so much. Suddenly a flood of tears that had been building up for almost three years started pouring from his eyes. Luis sat in his father's car, with his head on the steering wheel, and cried, "Mami, I miss you."

270 When he finally looked up, he saw that he was being watched. Sitting at a large window with a pad and a pencil on her lap was Naomi. At first Luis felt angry and embarrassed, but she wasn't laughing at him. Then she told him with her dark eyes that it was okay to come closer. He walked to the window, and she held up the sketch pad on which she had drawn him, not crying like a baby, but sitting on top of a mountain of silver disks, holding one up over his head. He had to smile.

280 The plate-glass window was locked. It had a security bolt on it. An alarm system, he figured, so nobody would steal the princess. He asked her if he could come in. It was soundproof too. He mouthed the words slowly for her to read his lips. She wrote on the pad, "I can't let you in. My mother is not home tonight." So they looked at each other and talked through the window for a little while. Then Luis got an idea. He signed to her that he'd be back, and drove to the junkyard.

290 Luis climbed up on his mountain of hubcaps. For hours he sorted the wheel covers by make, size, and condition, stopping only to call his father and tell him where he was and what he was doing. The old man did not ask him for explanations, and Luis was grateful for that. By lamppost light, Luis worked and worked, beginning to understand a little why his father kept busy all the time. Doing something that had a beginning, a middle, and an end did something to your head. It was like the satisfaction Luis got out of planning "adventures" for his Tiburones, but there was another element involved here that had nothing to do with showing off for others. This was a treasure hunt. And he knew what he was looking for.

Finally, when it seemed that it was a hopeless search, when it was almost midnight and Luis's hands were cut and bruised

CHARACTER

In line 266, underline the words Luis is finally able to express. Why is it important for Luis to be aware of these feelings?

IDENTIFY

Pause at line 274. What does Naomi do to make Luis smile?

CLARIFY

Who is the "princess" Luis refers to in line 277?

CHARACTER

Why is Luis finding such satisfaction in his "treasure hunt" (line 294)?

CHARACTER

Pause at line 303. What do Luis's plans for the future indicate about his change in attitude?

THEME

Why do you think Judith Ortiz Cofer named this story "Catch the Moon"?

THEME

Re-read the sidenotes labeled **character**. Think about how Luis changes. Then, make a generalization in which you state the story's theme.

from his work, he found it. It was the perfect match for Naomi's drawing, the moon-shaped wheel cover for her car, Cinderella's shoe. Luis jumped off the small mound of disks left under him and shouted, "Yes!" He looked around and saw neat stacks of hubcaps that he would wash the next day. He would build a display wall for his father. People would be able to come into the yard and point to whatever they wanted.

Luis washed the VW hubcap and polished it until he could see himself in it. He used it as a mirror as he washed his face and combed his hair. Then he drove to the Ramirez Funeral Home. It was almost pitch-black, since it was a moonless night. As quietly as possible, Luis put some gravel in his pocket and climbed the oak tree to the second floor. He knew he was in front of Naomi's window—he could see her shadow through the curtains. She was at a table, apparently writing or drawing, maybe waiting for him. Luis hung the silver disk carefully on a branch near the window, then threw the gravel at the glass. Naomi ran to the window and drew the curtains aside while Luis held on to the thick branch and waited to give her the first good thing he had given anyone in a long time.

The Secret Heart

Robert P. Tristram Coffin

Across the years he could recall
His father one way best of all.

In the stillest hour of night
The boy awakened to a light.

- 5 Half in dreams, he saw his sire
With his great hands full of fire.

The man had struck a match to see
If his son slept peacefully.

- He held his palms each side the spark
10 His love had kindled in the dark.

His two hands were curved apart
In the semblance^o of a heart.

He wore, it seemed to his small son,
A bare heart on his hidden one,

- 15 A heart that gave out such a glow
No son awake could bear to know.

It showed a look upon a face
Too tender for the day to trace.

- One instant, it lit all about,
20 And then the secret heart went out.

But it shone long enough for one
To know that hands held up the sun.

IDENTIFY

Pause at line 6. Whom does the son see one night?

IDENTIFY CAUSE & EFFECT

Why has the father come into his son's room (lines 7–8)?

INTERPRET

What does the son come to understand about his father (lines 13–18)?

THEME

Re-read the poem. What is its **theme**, or truth about human life?

^o **semblance**: form.

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Catch the Moon; The Secret Heart

Universal themes—broad statements or observations about life—occur again and again in literature. Each time a theme is explored, it takes on new life as new characters facing new situations wrestle with age-old concerns.

Comparison Chart Fill in the comparison chart below to compare the texts of “Catch the Moon” and “The Secret Heart.” Then, review your completed chart and identify the theme the two selections share. Write the shared theme below the chart.

	“Catch the Moon”	“The Secret Heart”
Main Character(s)/Speaker		
Conflict (what happens)		
What the character/speaker learns or discovers		
Theme(s)		

Statement of theme: _____

Test Practice

Catch the Moon; The Secret Heart

Complete the sample test item below. Then, read the explanation at the right.

Sample Test Item	Explanation of the Correct Answer
<p>In “Catch the Moon,” Luis understands that his father stays active because he wants to—</p> <p>A avoid wasting time</p> <p>B pass on a thriving business to Luis</p> <p>C forget about the death of his wife</p> <p>D find a new wife</p>	<p>The correct answer is C.</p> <p>A is not correct because the father never mentions time. B is not correct: Mr. Cintrón knows Luis doesn’t want to own a junkyard. D is not correct because the father still mourns his dead wife.</p>

DIRECTIONS: Circle the letter of the best response.

- | | |
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| <p>1. In “Catch the Moon,” Luis is working for his father because he—</p> <p>A can make lots of money at the junkyard</p> <p>B has been ordered to by a judge</p> <p>C feels sorry for his overworked father</p> <p>D wants to find a girlfriend</p> <p>2. Luis probably planned his activities with the Tiburones to—</p> <p>F get a part in a movie</p> <p>G make some money on the side</p> <p>H annoy his father</p> <p>J forget his unhappiness</p> | <p>3. In “The Secret Heart,” the boy realizes that his father is—</p> <p>A about to go on a long journey</p> <p>B walking in his sleep</p> <p>C showing how much he loves him</p> <p>D trying to relight a fire</p> <p>4. Which sentence best expresses a theme the story and poem share?</p> <p>F Small actions often reveal deep feelings.</p> <p>G Hidden love is no love at all.</p> <p>H Anger brings sympathy and love.</p> <p>J Hearts sometimes get broken.</p> |
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Reading Standard 3.5
Compare works that express a universal theme and provide evidence to support the ideas expressed in each work.

Test Practice

Catch the Moon; The Secret Heart

Figurative Language

DIRECTIONS: Circle the letter of the best response.



Reading Standard 1.1

Identify and use the literal and figurative meanings of words and understand word derivations.

1. "Working my hands to the bone" is an example of—
 A a theme
 B a simile
 C literal language
 D an idiom
2. In the phrase "steel jungle of his car junkyard," "steel jungle" is—
 F a gang fight
 G a metaphor
 H a simile
 J a nickname
3. Luis tells Mr. Cintrón to "keep the ice on that egg." "Egg" is used as a **metaphor** for—
 A breakfast
 B a cold drink
 C the bump on his father's head
 D a big head
4. The sentence "He didn't have the heart to do it anymore" contains—
 F a theme H personification
 G a simile J an idiom

Vocabulary in Context

DIRECTIONS: Complete the paragraph below by writing words from the box in the blanks. Use each word only once.

Word Box

harassing
dismantled
vintage
ebony
sarcastic
relics

Those (1) _____ cars of yours must be fifty years old! Do they run, or do you keep them as (2) _____ in that auto museum you call a garage? The (3) _____ ones look as black as the deepest night. You probably think I'm (4) _____ you with my (5) _____, unwanted comments. Not really; I'd be sorry if you (6) _____ and sold off your palace of vehicles.



Before You Go On ...

Check your Standards Mastery at the back of this book.